



OCVA Advocate

OFFICE OF CRIME VICTIMS ADVOCACY
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Serving as a voice within state government for crime victims and their families

Human Trafficking--Present Day Slavery

New Report From Trafficking Task Force

The following is an excerpt from the report by the Washington State Task Force Against Trafficking In Persons. The report was released by the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy in June, 2004. For a complete copy of the report, visit our website at www.ocva.wa.gov or call OCVA at 1-800-822-1067.

Trafficking in Persons is not a new phenomenon.

It is a modern day form of slavery and is one of the most lucrative criminal enterprises in today's world economy. Frank E. Loy, Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs, believes this number began growing in the early 1990's and that the trend is only increasing.

Trafficking includes the recruitment, transportation, or sale of persons for labor. Labor is forced and maintained through violence, threats and coercion. It is perpetuated through exploitation of vulnerable populations and exhibits slavery or prison-like conditions.

According to the Department of State, "In many destination countries, commercial sexual exploitation and the demands for inexpensive labor

have increased over the past several decades. Trafficking operates under an economic system that benefits from the exploitation and enslavement of vulnerable populations.

Present Day Slavery

Human trafficking, present day slavery, takes many forms. 21st century slavery involves transporting people within or across borders to, among other things, labor in sweatshops, perform domestic work, work in the sex industry, be married by international matchmaking, or to work as farm or timber laborers. These people, often deceived by recruiters, believe that this path will bring them and

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their loved ones a better life. In their countries of origin, victims of trafficking commonly experience poverty, oppression, persecution, bonded labor, armed conflict, civil unrest and lack of opportunity. Many victims are actively recruited by traffickers, some of whom are connected to organized crime.

In the late 1990's, service providers began to see a new kind of victim. These victims had complex cases involving basic survival needs, law enforcement guidance and assistance, immigration advocacy and safety planning. It became clear that many of these victims were in danger if they tried to get away from their present circumstances, whatever they were. As providers talked with each other and cases began to be known to the public, formal focus was placed on the issue of human trafficking.

Washington possesses many of the underlying conditions that support trafficking of persons. These conditions have been widely recognized by those studying the issue of trafficking and are common to many states.¹

1. Washington is a state with international borders.
2. Washington has multiple ports , some of which are international ports.
3. Washington has many areas of geographic isolation, which makes social isolation possible.

4. Indian Reservations add to the complexity of jurisdictional issues. Persons may be trafficked from one reservation to another, or from outside origins into the sovereign nations' reservation.

5. There is a market for the industry. The demand for agricultural, domestic, and sex industry workers continues.

6. There are pre-existing adult prostitution zones.

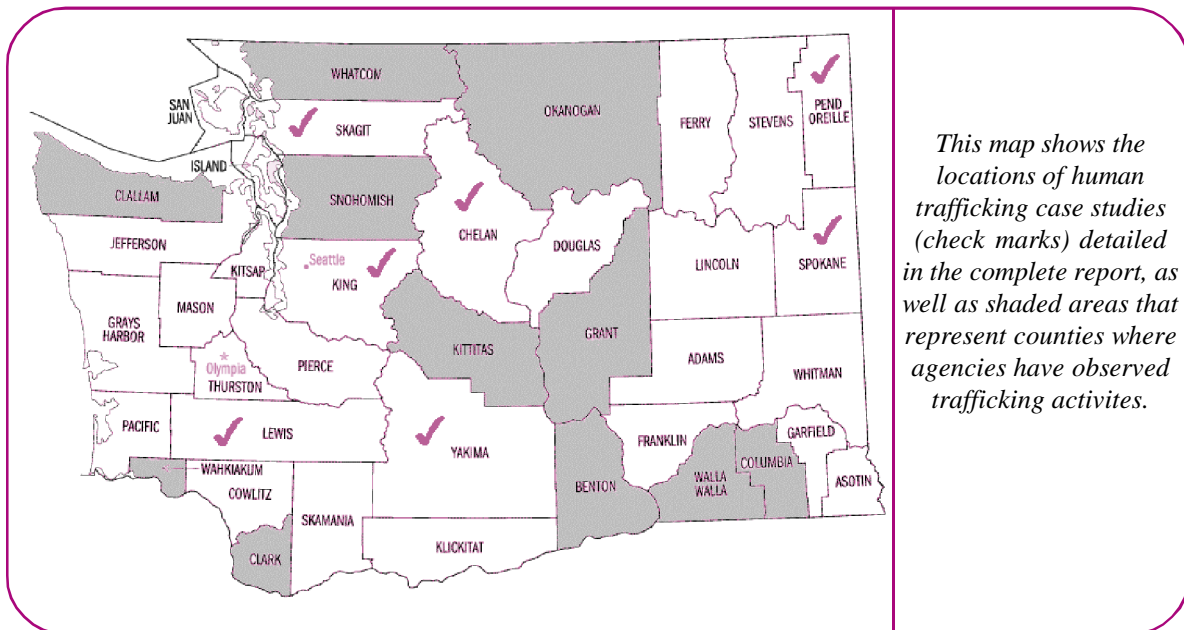
7. There is a population of transient, unattached males in Washington who are living on military bases or working in agriculture and the trucking industry. The presence of these detached men helps create a demand market.

8. Washington, like other states, negotiates and lives by myriad trade agreements. The disproportional impact of trade agreements on women worldwide forms a part of the structure upon which human trafficking in Washington State exists.²

All of the above listed conditions contribute to the climate in which the trafficking industry can not only exist, but prosper. These conditions help to make Washington one of two major international gateways and hub cities in the northwest region of the United States³ for the trafficking of children.⁴

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Human Trafficking, Present Day Slavery, (Continued)



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The United States is divided into five defined major regions. Washington is in the northwestern United States region. From Seattle, the cities typically included in the trafficking circuit, or cities to which and/or through which trafficking victims might be deployed, are Honolulu, Las Vegas, New Orleans, Portland, Vancouver, WA and Yakima. From those cities victims are trafficked throughout the region. That route extends into Canada as well.⁵

The following example of a 15-year-old girl from the Ukraine and living in Seattle illustrates the ordeal faced by many victims who are transported from foreign countries of origin.

She was trafficked by private car from her small village outside Kiev to downtown Kiev where she was taken by bus to St. Petersburg (Russian Federation). From there she was trafficked by train to Moscow from where she departed by plane to Frankfurt (Germany). A train again

was used to transport her from Frankfurt to Paris (France) where she was placed on a plane to Montreal (Canada). Over a period of several weeks, a variety of cars and vans were used to transport her across Canada to Vancouver and, eventually, into Portland and Seattle. She did not enter the U.S. at an established border crossing but rather, and with three other girls and their traffickers, walked across from Canada to the U.S. where a private van awaited them. At no time was this young woman in possession of a passport or visa that would identify her as a person who could enter the U.S. legally.⁶

This example was gathered before children were granted potential Unaccompanied Refugee Minor benefits. It is stories like hers that brought the urgent need for services and protection of unaccompanied trafficked children.

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Cultural Context and the Victim

The importance of culture cannot be overstated when dealing with victims of trafficking. These are people who are away from their own cultural context, often isolated, and carrying complex histories. Just some of the important elements to be considered are:

- ◆ *Legacy of oppression*
- ◆ *Fear- often they or loved ones have been threatened*
- ◆ *Violence and conflict in their homeland*
- ◆ *Culturally determined responses to conflict*
- ◆ *Poverty- in the homeland and U.S.A.*
- ◆ *Relationship to authorities/police*
- ◆ *Culturally determined gender differences*
- ◆ *Culturally influenced communication styles*
- ◆ *Language and interpretation*

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The Reality of Experience in Washington

Across the state of Washington service providers are reporting experiences with victims that help bring sharp focus to the picture of trafficking in Washington State.

Trafficking in Washington is not limited to the I-5 corridor. Though this is a commonly held notion, one look at the map on page 3 showing the locations of the illustrative case studies will show a very different reality. Each of the representative case studies comes from one of the counties shown with a check mark. The map shows that there are cases in the major population centers of Washington, and in some of the more isolated, rural regions of the state. These scenarios represent diverse experiences: mail order brides, agricultural laborers, domestic laborers, sex workers, and exploitation of children. In sum,

they represent well the challenges faced by victims and their advocates.

The more darkly shaded counties represent areas where state agencies, law enforcement and/or NGO's have observed activities that lead them to believe trafficking is happening, but are unable, as yet, to take any legal action.

Washington also exports perpetrators of sexual exploitation of children when one of our citizens, so inclined, travels to engage in sex tourism.

Modern day slavery looks different from face to face, experience to experience. It is occurring in many areas of Washington State. There are great variations in readily available services, and more variation in the training and community readiness to recognize and address the needs of those victimized by this crime.

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Identifying & Interacting With Victims of Human Trafficking

You may have encountered victims of trafficking without realizing their circumstances, and therefore, have lost a chance to help them escape a horrific situation. The following provides tips for identifying and assisting trafficking victims:

Victim Identification

A victim of trafficking may look like many of the people you help every day. You can help victims of trafficking get the assistance they need by looking beneath the surface for the following clues:

- Evidence of being controlled
- Evidence of an inability to move or leave job
- Bruises or other signs of battering
- Fear or depression
- Non-English speaking
- Recently brought to this country from Eastern Europe, Asia, Latin America, Canada, Africa or India
- Lack of passport, immigration or identification documentation

Traffickers use various techniques to keep victims enslaved. Some traffickers keep their victims under lock and key. However, the more frequent practice is to use less obvious techniques including:

- Debt bondage – financial obligations, honor-bound to satisfy debt
- Isolation from the public – limiting contact with outsiders and making sure that any contact is monitored or superficial in nature
- Isolation from family members and members of their ethnic and religious community
- Confiscation of passports, visas and/or identification documents
- Use or threat of violence toward victims and/or families of victims
- The threat of shaming victims by exposing circumstances to family
- Telling victims they will be imprisoned or deported for immigration violations if they contact authorities

- Control of the victims' money, e.g., holding their money for "safe-keeping"

The result of such techniques is to instill fear in victims. The victims' isolation is further exacerbated because many do not speak English and are from countries where law enforcement is corrupt and feared.

Victim Interaction

Asking the right questions may help you determine if someone is a victim of human trafficking. It is important to talk to a potential victim in a safe and confidential environment. If the victim is accompanied by someone who seems controlling, you should try to separate the victim from that person. The accompanying person could very well be the trafficker.

You should also enlist the help of a staff member who speaks the potential victim's language and understands his or her culture. Although not ideal, you can enlist interpreter services such as those provided by the ATT Language Line.

If the victim is a child, it is important to enlist the help of a social services specialist who is skilled in interviewing minor trafficking or abuse victims. Screen interpreters to ensure they do not know the victim or the traffickers and do not otherwise have a conflict of interest.

Victim Assistance

If you think you have come in contact with a victim of human trafficking, call the Trafficking Information and Referral Hotline at 1.888.373.7888. This hotline will help you determine if you have encountered victims of human trafficking, will identify local resources available in your community to help victims, and will help you coordinate with local social service organizations to help protect and serve victims so they can begin the process of restoring their lives. For more information on human trafficking visit www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking.

*Reprinted from **Tips for Identifying and Helping Trafficking Victims Fact Sheet**, part of the Campaign to Rescue & Restore Victims of Human Trafficking. Administration of Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking/campaign_kits/index.html#social. Accessed August 5, 2004.*

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Welcome, New OCVA Staff Members!

OCVA is pleased to announce two new members of our team who will be joining the OCVA staff in September. Christine Fenno will be filling the position of VAWA/DVLA Program Coordinator left vacant by Evans Mbajah. Before joining OCVA, Christine was Executive Director of the Abused Women's Advocacy Project in Auburn, Maine. She will add extraordinary capacity to OCVA with her wealth of direct service experience for battered women. She is also

very excited about working with rural programs. The second hire is Grace Call whose former experience was as Executive Director of the Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault. Grace will serve in a position that is a split between VAWA/DVLA contracting and Policy. Grace will be a nice addition to the programs, with her extensive experience and understanding of sexual assault. Grace has experience on both the State and national level policy development, advocacy, and coalition building.

Welcome, Christine & Grace!

**Congratulations
to
Mary Ellen
Stone
for
25 years of service
to sexual assault
victims at the
King County
Sexual Assault
Resource
Center!**

Although Volunteers Are Priceless...

*Many of you use volunteers for a variety of tasks in your agencies. Sometimes you get to show that value as an in-kind donation on grants, etc. Or, if you would just like to impress your board and community with the dollar value of using volunteers, here's a piece of data that might be useful. According to The Independent Sector (which has been calculating volunteer time since 1990), the rate released as of February 2002 was **\$16.05 per hour**.*

*This means that for every 100 hours that volunteers work at your organization, they have made an in-kind donation of their time worth \$1605! It may seem a bit odd that volunteers should be valued at a higher price than many organizations can afford to pay members of their paid staff. It's important to remember that this figure is the estimated **value** of volunteer time, not necessarily what you could afford to pay them!*

INFORMATION

The Office of Crime Victims Advocacy serves as a voice within state government for the needs of crime victims in Washington State.

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Footnotes

¹ Numerous sources cite varying versions of underlying conditions and contributing factors. Among them, Amy O'Neill Richard, International Trafficking in Women to the U.S.: A Contemporary Manifestation of Slavery and Organized Crime (Central Intelligence Agency Report, April, 2000) p.1., Richard Estes and Neil Alan Weiner, The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U.S., Canada and Mexico (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2001), Sex Trafficking Fact Sheet: United States Department of Health and Human Services campaign to Rescue and Restore Victims of Human Trafficking, 2004, and Florida Dept of Children and Families, Office of Refugee Services, Florida Responds to Human Trafficking, (Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida, Fall, 2003)

² Presentation on Combating Trafficking of Persons, by Rep. Velma Veloria, Washington State Legislature, March 23, 2004.

³ Gateways are considered the last port used by traffickers in the transport of trafficking victims

⁴ Richard Estes and Neil Alan Weiner, The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U.S., Canada and Mexico (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2001) 55.

⁵ Ibid, p. 117.

⁶ Richard Estes and Neil Alan Weiner, The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U.S., Canada and Mexico (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2001) 115.

The OCVAdvocate is a quarterly publication of this Office. Unless otherwise noted, articles were written by OCVA staff. Topic ideas for future issues may be sent to the address below or e-mail ocva@cted.wa.gov.



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